Interview

with

LILLIAN WILLIAMSON HUDSON

February 19, 1999

by Betsy Brinson, Ph.D.

Transcribed by Lucinda Spangler

Kentucky Oral History Commission
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This is an unrehearsed interview with Mrs. Lillian Williamson Hudson conducted at her residence on Northwestern Parkway in Louisville, Kentucky, on February 19, 1999. The interviewer is Betsy Brinson.

Betsy Brinson: Thank you, Mrs. Hudson, for talking with me today. What I'd like for us to do is, first off, will you tell me a little about your early background, where you were born, your family growing up, your education. What year were you born and where?

Lillian Hudson: I was born in New Albany, Indiana, right across from where we live almost, [cough] June 7, 1911. I'm 87, about to be 88.

BB: About to be 88. Okay.

Hudson: And, I lived there, other than years I was in college, until I married and moved to Louisville in 1937.

BB: Tell me about your growing up. How many children in the family?

Hudson: I had one brother, Earle Williamson. He was a year and a half younger than I and he was a very smart person, a very fine person. He died as a result of a car wreck when he was in his early fifties. He lived in Dayton, Ohio. He was a graduate of Ohio State and worked at Wright-Patterson Field. He had a very fine job there.

BB: How about your parents?

Hudson: My father was C. F. Williamson. He was originally from Madison, Indiana. He was a graduate of Indiana University and was principal of the grade and high school in New Albany, the old Scribner High School. And my mother was from Ohio; she was born in Wilberforce, Ohio. Have you heard of Wilberforce?

BB: Yes, I have. Was her family affiliated with the college?

Hudson: Her mother was in the first class at Wilberforce. That's a church college, A.M.E. church college, and she taught in Alabama. I think her first job was when she was around eighteen years old. She taught domestic science and then she taught in Illinois, and she was teaching in Illinois when she met my father; and they married and she came to New Albany to live, of course. And I was born, as I said, in 1911, my brother in 1913. My mother stayed at home with us until my brother was around five and a half. And the teacher who was teaching domestic science there, she left for some reason or other, and the superintendent asked my mother to fill in for her, which she did. And that ended up being a thirty-some year teaching job. She retired from there shortly after my father did. My father was a barber by trade. His father

owned a barbershop in Madison, Indiana downtown on the main street, and my father was a barber by trade. And in the summer,during those early years, teachers taught eight and a half months with pay, the rest of the year with no pay. So most people had to find second jobs in order to keep things going. Well, my grandparents lived in Xenia, Ohio. Have you ever heard of Xenia?

BB: I have.

Hudson: Wilberforce is just about three miles from Xenia. And the day after school closed when we were children, we would be ready to leave by train to go to Xenia to spend the summer. And my father would barber there in Xenia, and then a man that he knew owned a Chautauqua barbershop not far from Dayton, Ohio, and he asked my father to take charge of this Chautauqua tent barbershop. So he did, and he would commute back and forth to Xenia every weekend. And we would stay there until time for a teachers' meeting in New Albany, and then we'd come back to New Albany. But we spent our summers in Ohio.

BB: Did you stay with your grandparents?

Hudson: Yes, we stayed with my grandparents. So I was the only girl. My grandparents had four children, two girls and two boys. My mother had my brother and me, and she had a brother who had two boys. The family was small; we had a lot of cousins and extended family. My grandmother was a person who believed in taking in people who were "down on their luck," as she says. And my grandfather was a farmer. They lived right on the edge of Xenia, but he had three and a half acres there. And he had what they called a truck garden, a beautiful garden. He had so many rows of vegetables and so many rows of flowers. And my aunt, my mother's sister, and her husband worked in Dayton. He had contracted with one of these fine vegetable and fruit stands to sell my grandfather's things there. We'd sit on the side porch and hull lima beans and ( ) split baskets of vegetables and fruits [cough], excuse me, that he would take there to sell. And then my grandfather had a contract with the town to water—many of the streets were just dirt streets at that time—the streets or oil them in the summertime. He had his own equipment; he had three horses and a cow. And my grandmother had chickens and just everything to keep things going. So we spent our summers there and, of course, by me being the only girl they wanted me to go to college there, which I did. So I finished Wilberforce in 1932.

BB: And Wilberforce was an all-black college?

Hudson: That's right. A.M.E. Now Wilberforce had some state support, and when I went there it was all on the same campus. There was a ravine that separated what they called the state side and the church side. They had a very large seminary; there were a lot of seminarians there. A lot of Africans came to study at Wilberforce and it had a beautiful campus. It was just very rustic and just very, very beautiful. And the big tornado that we had that tore up here—I forget what year it was—just tore Wilberforce all to pieces. So after the tornado the church side built across a road, oh, 42 highway, a different college area. It was still Wilberforce, but they had a state side and a church side. But anyway . . .

BB: So you graduated in 1932?

Hudson: I graduated in 1932.

BB: And what did you study?

Hudson: Chemistry, of all things. [small laugh]

BB: Chemistry?

Hudson: My father, that was his major, so I call myself following in his footsteps. Never taught it a day in my life. [laughter] When I finished college—of course, that was during the Depression—and coming from a small town, my mother and father both in the school system, there was no room for me at all, you know. And here in Louisville they couldn't take care of all of their graduates so I was on the substitute list; and I did one or two days' substitute every now and then in New Albany, but I didn't work until after I married. I married in 1937 and my husband was a pharmacist; and he was a graduate of Meharry School of Pharmacy. You've heard of Meharry?

BB: Yes. How did you meet him?

Hudson: I can't hear you.

BB: How did you meet him?

Hudson: Well, he came to Louisville to work in a drugstore here; and we knew one of the pharmacists who worked there, who was actually part owner of it. And I met him through this friend of ours and we married.

BB: Did you like him right away when you first met him?

Hudson: Well, he was a very sociable, very likable person. He was very jolly, very, pardon me, very sociable, easy to know. And he was born in Canton, Mississippi. He was raised by a great uncle and his wife from the time he was eight and a half. His mother died when

he was eight and a half; his mother and father were separated. And they lived in Jackson, Mississippi, and he worked for a druggist there as a young boy; and through them he became interested in pharmacy. Through them he was able to go to Meharry, and he finished Meharry with honors. He was a very smart man, very sociable. He and I were married twelve years before Blaine was born. But, anyway, we lived at College Court. I don't know whether you ever—College Court was one of the first housing projects built here in Louisville. It was not built under public housing funds; it was built during Franklin Roosevelt's term. Lovely place, 125 units. One of the first—it was not under the same setup, you know, that public housing ended up being. Anyway, we lived there ten years till they put us out, [small laugh] and then we bought a home on Madison Street, 2418 Madison Street. And we lived there—I lived there thirty-seven years. My husband died after we were married twenty years. He had a stroke after we were married eighteen years; and he was unable to hardly function, you know, after that, but he was able to stay at home. My son was six and a half when his father had a stroke and eight and a half when he died, so it was a very sad childhood, you know, for him. My mother and father moved in with us after we bought the house on Madison Street. After we'd been there two years, my son was born; and my father died when my son was almost two years old. So my mother and my husband and my son and I were over there. But I lived there thirty-seven years, and then my mother lived with me and my son. Blaine, my son, married. He's been married more than one time. And he was in and out but my mother and my son and I lived there, you know, most of the time.

BB: Did you teach school at all?

Hudson: No, I didn't. I was going to tell you—while I lived at College Court, it was under the management of Earl Pruitt. He had quite big connections here in Louisville and politically, although we weren't supposed to be politically inclined, working in public housing. And I had a lot of time on my hands. At that time my husband went to work at noon and didn't get off until 1 o'clock the next morning, because that was before the forty-hour week went into effect. So I had a lot of time on my hands, so Earl Pruitt asked me if I would be interested in doing part-time work. I hadn't been able to get on teaching, you know, as a sub—as I said, they couldn't take care of all they had over here—so, anyway, I worked in the 1940 census. And after that they were preparing to build Beecher Terrace, which is a very large housing project here. That was one of the largest ones they built. And he asked me if I would be interested in working

in the tenant selection office there. So I told him, 'Yes,' and I worked a year in the tenant selection office there. The office was on Eleventh Street in the parish house where the Episcopal Church is. So then I didn't work for a year. Then there was an opening, a part-time cashier opening, where I was living there at College Court; and he asked me if I'd be interested in that because he was leaving College Court to become manager of this big, new project, Beecher Terrace. So I started off working in housing then a half day, and that was just fine because my husband was going to work at noon; I didn't go to work till 1 o'clock and it worked out fine for us. So I did that and then there was a full-time opening at Shepherd Square. Well, first, they built Shepherd Square during the wartime; it was what they considered the wartime project. People who were involved in war work or were families of war people, soldiers, got first preference. And, of course, people just flocked here from the south and filled up these projects, you know. [cough] Excuse me.

BB: From the south, do you mean from other southern states?

Hudson: Oh yes. They tell me they brought them here in boxcars for jobs. Those people got first preference as far as housing. But, anyway, I went to Shepherd Square and worked a year in the tenant selection office there. That's what they called a control clerk. I had control of their records. So after that I worked part time at College Court, then a full-time job opened up at Shepherd Square; and I debated whether or not I really wanted to work full time. But I didn't have any children, none were coming at that time, so I decided I would take this job. So I worked in housing thirty-seven years. I ended up being manager of Shepherd Square and College Court,Shepherd Square thirteen years, College Court eleven years—because they appointed a permanent manager after I had both of them that long.

BB: Tell me . . .

Hudson: They didn't hire women managers. That was the problem. They were very prejudiced toward women, and they didn't hire women managers. These jobs were under city civil service, and I took the test three times. All three times I was among the top three, and the selection was to be made among those top three each time. The first two times they appointed men; and, really, I was teaching some of the men what to do. In the meantime, they built a huge project, Carter Homes, that has just been recently torn down [interruption]. And I worked in tenant selection there, and then I worked in the office permanently there. And so the third time an opening came for a job at Shepherd Square, and I took the test again; and they didn't want to

consider me again. So there was a Dr. Rabb who lived here, Dr. Maurice Rabb. He was very involved in NAACP. I called him and told him what had happened, that they refused to let me take the test because I was a woman. They had recently passed a law that they could not discriminate against women.

BB: This was about when?

Hudson: Let's see.

BB: Fifties? Sixties?

Hudson: It was in—let's see, I'm trying to think what year it was. I retired in '76, and I worked in housing thirty-seven years.

BB: So about '63, early sixties?

Hudson: Yeah.

BB: Okay. And so the fact that you were a woman was a real liability, but what about the fact that you were black? Was that not an issue, too?

Hudson: Well, this was a black project, see. At that time, the projects were segregated. I should have mentioned that. See, if they built one for white, they built one for black. College Court was built for blacks, the other place was built for whites. Those were the first two. Then they built Clarksdale and Beecher Terrace. Clarksdale for whites, Beecher Terrace for blacks. See, they built separate—if they built one for whites, they built one for blacks. And so the projects were segregated; they were definitely segregated.

BB: How did Dr. Rabb become involved?

Hudson: So Dr. Rabb—I called Dr. Rabb and told him that they wouldn't let me take the test and that that was the third time. And he asked me where I was. He said, "I'll call you back within an hour." He called me back within an hour. He said, "You may go up and take the test." Cause he was getting ready to raise all kind of cane, you know. Well, to make a long story short, I was appointed manager of Shepherd Square; and I was there for thirteen years until I—sixty-five was the required retirement age. That was in your contract, which I was very opposed to, but it didn't change until way after I retired. So I had to retire at sixty-five, and after that I didn't do anything for two years; and then they asked me if I would work as a management consultant out at Iroquois Homes. That's a very huge project. So I worked out there as a management consultant for almost six months. And other than that, —well, that's my work history.

BB: I want to go back. Tell me about what went into selecting candidates to live there? What kinds of things did you look for?

Hudson: When housing first came into existence, tenants were really selected. We even had social workers who checked their records, checked the courts to see if they had court records. Well, then after they started building these huge projects, they stopped that; and we always say that was the breakdown of public housing because we just took people in mass. When Carter Homes first opened, we'd rent a hundred or 125 units a day as they were readied. We would just rent them in mass, you know. There was no selection of tenants and you just had rental offices; that's what it ended up being. And that's really, off course, when after the war ended, you see all these people came from the south and different places to work. They did not go back. They stayed here. That was really a big breakdown in housing.

BB: Did many of them lose their jobs after the war?

Hudson: Oh yes. See, for instance, Shepherd Square, we had a sheet this long, legal-size sheets with war plants listed; anybody who worked there, they were eligible to move in. Well, they made good money. You never had any rent delinquencies at all. Well, when the war ended, a lot of those places just stopped right now. And, of course, those people did not go back south; they stayed here and ended up on the welfare rolls. And, you see, we used to have social workers who would make visits to the homes. They got so there were too many; they just could not do that. So housing got so they would hire social workers to work on the site; otherwise, we would have been in worse shape than we ended up being in, you see. But I did that type of work. I didn't teach because there were no openings here; they couldn't take care of their own over here. And I didn't teach.

BB: Let me go back to the NAACP. Were you a member or were you involved with any of their activities?

Hudson: I was not—I was, you know, I paid a membership . . .

BB: Right.

Hudson: . . . but I was not an active participant in that.

BB: You did belong to the NAACP?

Hudson: Yes, just like you would belong—you know, they solicited memberships, but in housing . . .

BB: Do you remember . . .

Hudson: . . . the thing I regretted—I often said I thought I would like to have worked in politics, but we could not work in politics.

BB: Why couldn't you?

Hudson: In public housing we could not work in politics.

BB: That was the policy?

Hudson: That was the policy.

BB: You would remain nonpartisan?

Hudson: That's right. That's right.

BB: What can you tell me about the NAACP here?

Hudson: Well, I can't tell you a great deal because I know they, you know, fought for rights. If they felt you were . . .

BB: Were there issues in the community, I mean, obviously you had an issue that you . . .

Hudson: I had an issue, yes. My issue was not just because I was black, because I was a woman. That was the issue that, you know, Dr. Rabb cleared up with them.

BB: Excuse me. At what point did they begin to open up the housing projects to integrate them?

Hudson: Well, while I was running Shepherd Square, we took in some white families. They began to take in a few at a time, not too many, because we couldn't take care of all the black families that needed housing. You see, they were all segregated as it was because see there was—there were a lot of projects here in the city, as you know, and—now Carter Homes has since been torn down, which is good—it was a nice place when it first opened.

BB: But at the point that they began to integrate the projects, were they then pretty much occupied by people who were on public assistance?

Hudson: A lot of them ended up being on public assistance.

BB: . . . or low income?

Hudson: They were built for low-income families, you see. Now, see, where we lived at College Court, my husband and I, that was not—they weren't built under that—we had teachers living out there, mail carriers. M husband was a pharmacist. There was a vice president of an insurance company. They were very selective as to people—it was really like a college campus, truthfully. There weren't but about 125 units there; it was really a very select group.

BB: Tell me about Shepherd Square when you began to admit white families. How did that work out?

Hudson: Well, it worked out okay. We didn't have that many. We didn't have that many white families at that time. Of course, in later years they had many more, you know, white families. Now, when, when I did the management consultant work out at Iroquois Homes, that, at one time, had been all white. And, of course, they had begun to integrate, you know, before I retired; [cough] and there were a number of black families out there. Of course, it was one of the larger projects here, too. After housing got so big, social services couldn't take care of all the social needs. City recreation was supposed to take care of the recreation on the sites, social services take care of the social services. And they couldn't do that. There were too many people so, as I said, we had our own social workers; and recreation really didn't take care of recreation really like they should. In the beginning, housing really, and it still does, answers a need for people with low income; and there's so many, many people with low income.

BB: When both of those projects integrated, how did the black residents feel about the whites coming in, or vice versa, how did the whites feel about the blacks?

Hudson: They were not resentful at all. And, really, I didn't have too many white families at Shepherd Square at the time; and I don't think they have too many there now.
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Hudson: . . . to be handled by the state and the city broke down because there were too many people. So, housing really had to pick up and take care of what they could themselves, you see.

BB: So, by and large, these were very segregated communities—well, they were segregated communities up until a certain point which would have been in the sixties, you think?

Hudson: Yes. They were segregated completely.

BB: I want to talk with you about any involvement you might have had in trying to eliminate legal segregation along the way.

Hudson: None. I could not work in politics.

BB: Okay.

Hudson: We could not work in politics. I regretted that. I had a cousin who was very active in politics, and she wanted to get me involved, you know. But we could not work in politics.

BB: Were you a city employee?

Hudson: Yes. I worked under city civil service.

BB: Okay. And had you been involved in, say, demonstrations or . . .

Hudson: No.

BB: . . . you would have lost your job, do you think?

Hudson: We were expected not to do that.

BB: I want to ask you about Blaine because Blaine came at a different period and was very involved, I know, in some of the civil rights activities and . . .

Hudson: Well, he became very involved, you see, he came along during the years of Martin Luther King; and he became very involved in the takeover out at University of Louisville. You know all about that.

BB: Well, I've heard about it. Tell me what you know about it.

Hudson: Well, my son was a very brilliant young man, and he finished school with very high honors, as you know. And he was a National Merit Scholar; he could have gone to any college in the United States. He had catalogs stacked this high in our sunroom. So, of course, his father had been dead, you know, for several years. Just his mother, my mother, and me and he decided he would either go to Michigan or U of L. [small laugh] He was invited to a lot of

colleges and he did go to Michigan and he visited up there. He liked it but he didn't like the huge campus; and it was during the wintertime when he went, so he said well he thought he'd rather go to U of L. I think he wanted to stay at home, truthfully. [cleared throat] And his scholarship was through Meany—what was that organization George Meany was president of?

Hudson: AFL-CIO. His scholarship was sponsored by the AFL-CIO. Full scholarship—he could have gone anyplace, but he chose U of L. And, of course, he hadn't been there but about a year when he became very involved in some of the policies out there. And they were very respectful of his efforts, but he was put out of school for a year. He was one of the main ones who took over the office . . .

BB: Of the president.

Hudson: . . . of the president and was arrested. I had never been to court in my life until—well, I had been to court hearings for tenants I had problems with—but just to go for a court hearing, a big court hearing . I went three times and the people who supported Blaine—we were in the Episcopal Church at that time—the people who supported that student movement were the Catholics and the Baptists. Every time we went to court the courtroom would be lined up with Baptists and Catholic priests and sisters supporting these students. And, of course, they really wanted to put them in jail, you know, but fortunately they didn't.

BB: Approximately how many students were involved in that sit-in?

Hudson: There were three main ones, but I think there were about five altogether. But they were put out of school for a year and, of course, he lost the monetary value of his scholarship. But he got a beautiful letter from George Meany supporting what he was doing, but it was against their policy to support him monetarily.

BB: What happened with the court hearings?

Hudson: Well, finally—they didn't have to serve any time, but they could not go back to school for a year. He couldn't go back to U of L for a year so he was out for a year. That period of time, I didn't quite know which way he was going to go, you know. But he did go back to school and really he did very, very well. And he always has a job or something, you know. He worked at Shawnee High School for a while; he was still in school.

BB: What did he do for the high school?

Hudson: He worked, I think in an advisory position, not teaching. He wasn't teaching.

BB: I want to go back to the time of the takeover of the president's office. Were you aware that that was going on then?

Hudson: As I said, we belonged to the Episcopal Church; and I was in my office at Shepherd Square, and the rector from my church called. He said, '"o you know where your son is?'" I said, "No, why?" "He's in jail." He never said, "What can I do to help him? Or kiss my foot." or nothing. I didn't go to church for five years. [silence]

BB: I would think that it would be very difficult to have your son in a situation like that.

Hudson: I can hardly hear you.

BB: How did you feel about Blaine being involved?

Hudson: . . . being involved?

BB: . . . in all of that?

Hudson: He was more involved than I realized until he was arrested, you know. But I supported him. Every time he went to court, I went to court. I had a cousin that was married to a bondsman; at that time they had bondsmen. And so that was no problem to get him to pay the bond for all the fellows, you know. I don't think he was ever kept in jail, but he always went prepared. And because they never knew, you know, what to expect. But it was kind of a rough time, you know, during those years; and I didn't know quite which way he might go. But he ended up going to U of K and, of course, he got his doctorate from U of K.

BB: Oh, so after the year was over, he didn't go back to U of L?

Hudson: He went back to U of L.

BB: He went back to U of L?

Hudson: Yes, he went back to U of L.

BB: And then he went to do graduate work at U of K?

Hudson: Then he went to U of K. He got his masters from U of L. He worked in the meantime, you know, and then well, he got aid to go to U of K. Of course, he had to live on campus there for a year, had to establish housing there for a year. He had a wonderful committee chairman—I forget that man's name—but when they signed off for his doctorate, why he wanted to take me, you know, to meet his committee. They really wanted him to go someplace else than to stay in Louisville; but he wanted to stay here. And he's been very satisfied.

BB: Do you remember what his dissertation topic was at UK?

Hudson: I don't remember the topic of it, no.

BB: I would guess it must be something about PanAfrican history?

Hudson: Yes, it was very interesting. I have a copy of it somewhere. I can't put my hands on it, but I'll tell him to tell you what it is. [cough]

BB: I'll ask him when I see him next time.

Hudson: His committee thought really he should really go someplace else, you know, but, of course, my mother lived to be 101. And he just didn't want to leave.

BB: I want to go back to the Episcopal priest who called you because, obviously, it was a difficult time; and it still is difficult for you to think about that.

Hudson: Well, as I said, I didn't go to church for five years and in the meantime—well, a friend of mine here was a friend of a Catholic priest, Father Robertson, Vernon Robertson. Did you ever hear of him? He was very prominent here. He died just last year; he was pastor of that church on Shelby Street. Well, anyway, he was pastor of St. Charles Barromeo Church at Twenty-seventh and Chestnut, which was just about two and a half blocks from us. He asked this friend of mine, Dr. Wall's wife, if she could recommend someone in the neighborhood who would serve on the board, at that time, for this girl's high school, Loretta High School board. So she told him about me and, through him, I learned that he had started off as an Episcopal rector, and he became disillusioned with the Episcopal Church. He was from a very, very wealthy family here in Louisville. He studied and he traveled all over Rome, all over Europe. And he was in a lot of the cathedrals and, just all of a sudden, he said it came to him that Catholicism was really what he was seeking. So he studied in Rome and became pastor of St. Charles Barromeo for about twelve years at Twenty-seventh and Chestnut. So after I agreed to serve on the board at Loretta—of course, they closed Loretta High School—and I served on some other committees. So I thought, "Well, I think I'll visit the church over here." [small laugh]

BB: You served on these other programs though. Was this while you were still a member of the Episcopal Church?

Hudson: I had not been attending but I was serving on, yes, I was serving on this committee.

BB: So you were really sort of doing your own little protest against the church . . .

Hudson: Not at that particular time. It really wasn't that much of a church thing because they ended up closing Loretta High School; and that was really what they were trying to do, to see if they could keep it open. [cough] But they didn't have enough support, you know, to keep

it open. Anyway, I thought I'd visit Father Robertson's church. He was a very fine person, very broadminded, very outspoken. From a very, very wealthy family here in Louisville. And as a young girl, I had visited the Catholic church a lot because we had Catholic neighbors in New Albany. I'd get up and go to church with them at 5 o'clock in the morning. Well, my father wasn't enthused—he didn't mind me going into the Episcopal church; we had a lot of relatives in the Episcopal church then. My father was a Baptist, my mother A.M.E. My brother, he joined the Baptist church, and I ended up in the Episcopal church. My father was very broadminded; he didn't expect us to do what he did, but he didn't want me to go into the Catholic church. [cleared throat] But, anyway, to make a long story short, I thought, "Well, I didn't have to answer to anybody." My husband was gone; he was an Episcopalian when we married, and he didn't want to change at that time. I said, "Well, I can do what I want to do now." So I went in the Catholic church and I was very active in St. Charles. I'm not able to go now but I belong to the cathedral. I moved to Kentucky Towers. Do you know where that is?

BB: No.

Hudson: That's at Sixth and Muhammed Ali. No, Fifth and Muhammed Ali. Used to be the old Kentucky Hotel and they made it into a lovely apartment building. My mother and I moved there, and I lived there eleven years. And I've been here two years. I lived on Madison Street in the house we bought thirty-seven years. And my son married and . . .

BB: You have how many grandchildren now?

Hudson: Blaine has one daughter and two adopted children. The girls will be twenty-one this year. The boy, he's twenty-three. And by this wife he has three stepchildren. That was one going up the steps. There are two girls and a boy. The girl is fifteen, the oldest one; she will be sixteen next in April.

BB: They are lovely young women.

Hudson: Yeah, she's very smart. She's very talented; she's in the arts program at Manual High School. Does beautiful artwork. The youngest girl is thirteen and she goes to Newburg Middle School. Now where she'll go next year, they have not decided. There's a little boy; he's eleven. He's a real corker. Live wire. He goes to the Brown. They all went to the Brown at one time, but now they're scattered. I think the youngest girl may go to Manual next year; I'm not sure. She's very involved in music and cheerleading; she's a cheerleader out there.

BB: So it's probably pretty lively around here?

Hudson: Very, very lively. Very, very lively. They're being quiet, I think, under duress right now.

BB: Well, thank you. I'm almost finished.

Hudson: Oh, that's all right.

BB: I wanted to ask you to tell me about Evelyn Jackson.

Hudson: Evelyn Jackson is a very close friend of mine. We've been club members for years, sorority sisters . . .

BB: Which sorority?

Hudson: Alpha Kappa Alpha.

BB: Okay.

Hudson: I was initiated in Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority at Wilberforce the first semester I was eligible to go in. We had to complete three whole semesters before you could be eligible for initiation. I was very active in the sorority; I haven't been that active as a graduate member. I'm a boule, what they call a boule member now, but I'm not really that active in much of anything. I belong to two little clubs. My son teases me about my gambling clubs. I belong to a little poker club and a little poqueno club. And they meet once a month so I try to go to those.

BB: So you met Evelyn through your sorority?

Hudson: I met Evelyn after I married and because I was active in the graduate chapter of the sorority and she was too. Evelyn and so many of my friends taught under their system here where teachers who married lost their jobs. And so many of my friends in Evelyn's age group did not have children, which I thought was very sad. Because if they married, they lost their job. Some of them slipped away and married. One or two even had children out of town, you know. But if they were caught, they lost their jobs. You knew about that law?

BB: Yes.

Hudson: So she's very versed in all of that because she came up through that age. She is ninety years old now. She celebrated her ninetieth birthday in the fall.

BB: Is she living here in Louisville?

Hudson: Yes, she lives on Virginia Avenue and let's see if I have her address in here. [cough]

BB: How was Evelyn active in civil rights?

Hudson: Teachers didn't participate too much, you know, in those movements because, of course, she could tell you more about that; but she became a school principal [cleared throat] and was principal of, I think, three different schools. The last school, former Virginia Avenue, which was a large elementary school. She's a very smart woman. I don't have her address here. Let me get my book in there.

BB: Yes and thank you for this interview.

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